

DEPARTMENT OF FAIR EMPLOYMENT & HOUSING

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**COMMISSION FINDS IN FAVOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF FAIR EMPLOYMENT
AND HOUSING IN FIVE DISCRIMINATION CASES**

Sacramento – The Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) today announced awards in five discrimination cases the Department brought before the Fair Employment and Housing Commission (FEHC). The decisions award more than \$177,300 in damages, penalties, and fines to victims in four complaints alleging housing discrimination and an employment-related complaint alleging pregnancy discrimination.

According to DFEH Director Dennis Hayashi, the cases represent significant victories for victims and represent the Department's deep commitment to eradicating discrimination, wherever it occurs. "Ideally, a person's home or place of employment should be a safe, professional environment, not a place where individuals feel humiliated or threatened. The Commission's findings confirm that these complainants were denied their rights to live and provide for their families without being subjected to discrimination forbidden by California law. The awards are clearly justified given the illegal and, in some cases, outrageous nature of the discriminatory behavior alleged."

- A Stockton woman was awarded \$25,000 in emotional distress damages and \$40,000 in civil penalties after the Commission found that her landlord subjected her to repeated unwanted sexual advances and harassment. The Department won two sexual harassment cases against this same landlord late last year on behalf of two female tenants, resulting in awards totaling \$95,000.
- An Antioch dentist was ordered to pay \$35,000 for emotional distress, \$7,655 for lost wages, and \$5,000 in administrative fines for denying an employee, also a dentist, the right to return from pregnancy leave after the birth of her third child.
- A West Sacramento mother of three was awarded \$35,000 in emotional distress damages and \$11,000 in civil penalties for sexual harassment committed by her property owner/landlord, who also threatened to evict her and her children when she refused his advances.
- An Auburn condominium homeowner's association was ordered to pay \$17,998.50 in emotional distress damages, civil penalties, and actual costs

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after they refused to allow a mentally disabled couple to keep a dog in their home as a companion animal. The association was also ordered to change its bylaws to reflect California law on reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities, including provisions permitting and regulating pets.

- Finally, the Commission awarded a San Jose man \$740 in emotional distress damages and out-of-pocket expenses from a prospective landlord who stated that she was “afraid of black males” when referring to the victim in a conversation with another applicant for the same rental room.

In 2001, the Department received over 19,000 complaints alleging discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and acts of hate violence. Further information about DFEH and its services may be obtained by calling:

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| (800) 884-1684 | Employment & public accommodation |
| (800) 233-3212 | Housing |
| (866) 460-HELP (4357) | Hate Violence Hotline |

or by accessing DFEH's website at www.dfeh.ca.gov.

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